

Blow (Under-Secretary for Public Works) were in attendance. A shorthand reporter was also in attendance to take notes.

Dr. Findlay made a statement on behalf of Mr. Dalston in connection with a letter he (Mr. Dalston) had written to Mr. Blow (Under-Secretary for Public Works).

Mr. Bell read the letter in question to the Committee, and asked that the same be allowed to follow Mr. Blow's statement (taken on Thursday, 20th September, 1900), which was granted.

Dr. Findlay then addressed the Committee, and handed in a statement, also a file of letters.

The Right Hon. Mr. Seddon handed in a paper containing a series of letters written by himself respecting clause 33 of the Midland Railway contract.

On the motion of Mr. Graham, *Resolved*, That this Committee do now adjourn till Thursday at 10.30 a.m.

The Committee then adjourned.

#### FRIDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1900.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present*: Mr. W. Fraser, Mr. Graham, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Palmer, Captain Russell, and the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon.

In the absence of the Chairman, *Resolved*, on the motion of Mr. Palmer, That Mr. W. Fraser do now take the chair.

Mr. Fraser then took the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. J. H. B. Coates (petitioner), Mr. Norman H. M. Dalston (petitioner), M. C. H. Mills, M.H.R. (who presented the petitions), Dr. Findlay (solicitor for the petitioners), and Mr. H. D. Bell (solicitor for the Crown) were in attendance. A shorthand reporter was also in attendance to take notes.

Dr. Findlay addressed the Committee.

Mr. Bell also addressed the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned.

#### TUESDAY, 9TH OCTOBER, 1900.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present*: Mr. W. Fraser, Mr. Graham, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Palmer, Captain Russell, the Right Hon. Mr. Seddon, and the Hon. Mr. Ward.

In the absence of the Chairman, *Resolved*, on the motion of the Right Hon. the Premier, That Mr. W. Fraser do now take the chair.

Mr. Fraser then took the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

On the motion of the Right Hon. the Premier, *Resolved*, That evidence be taken as to the market-value of the railway as a going concern.

The meeting then adjourned *sine die*.

#### MONDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1900.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present*: Mr. W. Fraser, Mr. Graham, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Palmer, Captain Russell, the Right Hon. Mr. Seddon, and the Hon. Mr. Ward.

In the absence of the Chairman, *Resolved*, on the motion of the Right Hon. the Premier, That Mr. W. Fraser do now take the chair.

Mr. Fraser then took the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Crow, Private Secretary to the Right Hon. the Premier, was called, and asked to take down the following proposed report in shorthand, viz:—

Your Committee has taken evidence and heard counsel on behalf of the petitioners and the Government, but time will not permit it to conclude its investigations this session. Without prejudicing the situation, or in any way committing the colony, your Committee deems it advisable that evidence be obtained as to the value as a going concern of those sections of the railway which were completed at the time the Government took possession. This should be done irrespective of any further expenditure of moneys in the construction of any portion of the unconstructed portions of the railway. It should be left to the Government to determine as to the best means of taking evidence. This could be done either by Royal Commission, or it might be left over until next session, when the Committee could resume its investigations. For this purpose the Committee would ask the House to allow the present petitions to be dealt with as petitions of next session. If the suggestion of the Committee that evidence be taken by a Royal Commission during the recess is adopted, the Committee recommends that the evidence so taken be printed and circulated amongst members prior to the opening of next session. The Committee further reports that evidence, addresses of counsel, and papers be laid on the table.

The Clerk was instructed to make copies of the above proposed report, and circulate the same amongst the members of the Committee.

It was agreed to consider the said proposed report at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned.